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FACT SHEET

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Improving Trial Court Facilities: Fiscal Year 2007–2008 Funding Requests

San Joaquin—New Stockton Courthouse

Calaveras—New San Andreas Courthouse
Lassen—New Susanville Courthouse
Los Angeles—New Long Beach Courthouse
Madera—New Madera Courthouse
Riverside—New Riverside Mid-County Region Courthouse
San Benito—New Hollister Courthouse
San Bernardino—New San Bernardino Courthouse
Tulare—New Porterville Courthouse

In April 2007 the Judicial Council adopted an updated Trial Court Capital Outlay Plan that includes 175 new construction, major renovation, and expansion projects estimated to cost \$9.8 billion (January 2007 dollars). In August 2006 the Judicial Council directed staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to submit, as part of the fiscal year 2007–2008 budget process, funding requests for nine new trial court facilities. The initial funding request for these nine urgently needed projects is \$31.2 million in 2007–2008 with total project costs estimated to be \$1.2 billion, which would be funded by State Court Facilities Construction Funds and state General Obligation Bond Funds. If approved, these projects mark important progress toward implementing needed projects for courts across California. As noted below, the judicial branch will additionally pursue alternative revenue sources over the next several years to support the full implementation of the statewide capital plan.

New Stockton Courthouse

A new Stockton courthouse is proposed for initial funding of \$6.6 million for fiscal year 2007–2008. The new facility will house 30 courtrooms. The estimated total cost for this 282,763-gross-square-foot courthouse is \$231.7 million (escalated to construction mid-point estimated as fall of 2011). The majority of the site for the new courthouse—the Hunter Square Plaza, adjacent to the courthouse—will be donated by the City of Stockton to the State. The proposed project funding source is State Court Facility Construction Funds and state General Obligation Bond Funds. This project—ranked in the Immediate Need priority group of the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan—is one of the highest priority capital outlay projects for the judicial branch.

No Security, Severe Overcrowding, Poor Physical Conditions, and Reduced Access to Court Services

The City of Stockton is served by 22 courtrooms in the Court Wing building—adjacent to the County Administration Building—which is among the worst in the state in terms of lack of security and overcrowding. This facility cannot meet the needs of the court, which both receives a higher percentage of criminal felony filings and holds more jury trials than the state average. This facility cannot adequately serve the growing demand for court services due to the ongoing and anticipated high population growth in the County. The deplorable conditions of the existing facilities and the public's hindered access to court services are among the reasons why the proposed new Stockton courthouse is urgently needed.



The Stockton Courthouse is very overcrowded. After waiting an average of 30 minutes at the main entrance to enter the facility (these lines regularly extend around the block), people must wait more than 30 minutes in line to pay a parking ticket. The traffic department line blocks the entrance to the criminal department (located directly across the corridor), creating additional congestion and confusion for the public.

Local Government Collaboration on Project

The City of Stockton, City Council adopted a resolution to donate land—the Hunter Square Plaza, which is adjacent to the County Administration Building—to the state for this project in downtown Stockton area. This land donation will reduce the cost to the state and allow the project to move more quickly into the design phase.

Long-term Funding Needs

The California judicial branch is exploring additional, alternative means to fund the state's sizable need for courthouse infrastructure improvements. Options include pursuing bond funding—consideration will be given to both revenue and general obligation bonds. Another potential consideration involves increasing criminal penalties and other filing fees to be contributed to the State Court Facilities Construction Fund for the sole purpose of funding court construction projects. While these initiatives evolve, the Judicial Council will pursue annual funding requests to begin to address the most critical deficiencies in the state's courthouses.

More Information

A project feasibility report for the New Stockton courthouse, dated September 8, 2006, was prepared by AOC staff to document the poor functional and physical conditions of the existing court facilities in San Joaquin County, explore options for how best to meet the need for improved facilities, and estimate the cost to construct a new facility. This document can be downloaded from

http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/final_san_joaquin_pfr_06_09_06.pdf.

Subsequent to the completion of this document, the Judicial Council adopted updated judicial needs, which resulted in the requirement for one additional courtroom in this project (for a total of 30 courtrooms).

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